



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

"Parks Make Life Better!"

Russ Guiney, Director

John Wicker, Chief Deputy Director

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July 07, 2015

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**ACCEPT CYCAD PLANT DONATION FROM FREDERICK ELSEA FOR DESCANSO GARDENS
(FIFTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT) (3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Approval of the recommended actions will accept a donation from Frederick Elsea to Descanso Gardens.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Find the proposed project categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act.
2. Accept a one-time donation of approximately 165 cycad plants of 65 different species valued at approximately \$100,000 from Frederick Elsea to be used for permanent exhibit and enhancement of the Descanso Gardens collections.
3. Instruct the Acting Executive Officer of the Board to send a letter of appreciation to Frederick Elsea for his generous donation.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval of the recommended actions would allow for improvements at Descanso Gardens. The Department of Parks and Recreation (Department) believes that these plants will make an excellent addition to and significantly enhance the section of Descanso Gardens known informally as 'Jurassic Park.' In addition to their rarity and pleasing aesthetic, the cycads will also strengthen our education programs as they represent an ancient plant lineage, connecting the distant past to the present.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The proposed recommendations support the Board-approved County Strategic Plan Goals of Operational Effectiveness/Fiscal Sustainability (Goal 1) and Integrated Service Delivery (Goal 3) by improving facilities and programs that will enhance recreational opportunities for County residents.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Acceptance of this one-time donation of cycad plants does not require matching funds from the Department. The Descanso Gardens Guild will provide ongoing care to the cycad plants, as part of the operating agreement between the County and the Descanso Gardens Guild.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Government Code Section 25355 permits the County to accept donations or other gifts for a specific County purpose. Section 2.4.2 of the County Fiscal Manual authorizes County departments to accept donations in excess of \$10,000 with Board approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. The Project, which includes acceptance of a donation and installation of approximately 165 cycad plants from Frederick Elsea to Descanso Gardens, is within certain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets the criteria set forth in Section 15304 (b) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Class 4(c) of the County's Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because the Project provides for new landscaping.

The proposed Project will not involve the removal of healthy, mature, or scenic trees. Additionally, the proposed Project is not in a sensitive environment, and there are no cumulative impacts, unusual circumstances, or other limiting factors that would make the exemption inapplicable based on the proposed Project's records.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

This generous donation from Frederick Elsea would enable the Department to provide enhanced facilities and programs at Descanso Gardens. With visitation at the facility now in the range of 350,000 per year, this gift promises to bring both pleasure and educational opportunities to literally millions of people in the future.

CONCLUSION

Please return one adopted copy of this action to the Chief Executive Office and the Department of Parks and Recreation and instruct the Acting Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors to send a letter of appreciation to Frederick Elsea for his generous donation.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors

7/7/2015

Page 3

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Russ Guiney".

RUSS GUINEY

Director

RG:HS:HM:kb

c: Interim Chief Executive Officer
Interim County Counsel
Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors